

# The Cruise Missile

## Preventing New Arms Race With U.S. Is Seen as Key Soviet Goal in Geneva

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 1 — Limiting American cruise missiles may now have become the main Soviet goal in the strategic arms reduction talks in Geneva. At the same time, the Soviet Union seems to be laying the groundwork for deploying large numbers of its own cruise missiles.

**News** This is the judgment of Administration officials involved in the two sets of Soviet-American talks in Geneva on limiting strategic or intercontinental nuclear weapons and on reducing medium-range missiles deployed in Europe. This view seems to be supported by statements made in an interview in Moscow by Maj. Gen. Viktor Starodubov, a member of the Soviet negotiating team at the strategic arms talks.

He said no arms control agreement would be "of any value" if the United States began a new race in cruise missiles while seeking to reduce the heavy land-based missiles in which the Soviet Union has an advantage.

Current American programs call for the deployment of 8,000 land-, sea- and air-based cruise missiles, beginning in December. Deployment of cruise missiles by the Soviet Union, according to Administration officials, is still several years away.

As a number of Administration officials analyze the situation, the Soviet leaders probably believe that they can do nothing to stop deployment of new American Trident submarines and missiles and are probably unwilling to trade their own large land-based missiles to stop the new American MX land-based missile.

This leaves them essentially with the goal of trying to curtail American cruise missiles, while they try to step up their own cruise missile programs. Officials said this had been a Soviet objective since the beginning of nuclear arms talks in 1970.

But now there are two new factors.

First, according to Administration intelligence analysts, the Soviet Union is

closing the gap in cruise missile technology. It used to be 10 years behind, and now the officials say it is less than five years behind at most.

Second, American deployments are no longer theoretical, but are set to begin in December on a squadron of 16 B-52's. The Air Force plans to deploy 3,800 air-launched cruise missiles on B-52's and B-1's. The Army plans to deploy 464 ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe. Navy programs call for some 4,000 sea-launched cruise missiles, most with conventional rather than nuclear warheads.

### Difficulties in Testing

There have been recent reports of difficulties in the testing programs that could slow down deployment schedules, but the Pentagon maintains that basically all is going well.

William G. Hyland, a former adviser to President Ford and now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, says the Soviet priorities will be to try to eliminate the ground-launched cruise missiles for Europe, ban or sharply curtail sea-launched cruise missiles and limit air-launched cruise missiles.

His reasoning, supported by many Administration experts, is that the Soviet Union knows it has no chance of stopping the United States' air-launched program because it is too far along, and that the Russians probably want to develop an air-launched program of their own to extend the limited abilities of their long-range bombers.

Moscow would like to stop the sea-launched program, but probably understands that the American Navy is too committed to at least antiship cruise missiles and probably land-attack cruise missiles with conventional warheads as well. The Soviet Navy might also desire its own program.

The American ground-launched program may seem the most vulnerable to Moscow because of opposition to the missiles in Europe. Also, the Russians have no interest in developing cruise missiles for Europe because they already have a large number of medium-range ballistic missiles.

In the strategic arms reductions talks, Moscow proposed an unspecified limit on nuclear warheads and bombs. According to Administration officials, the Russians want to count all 3,800 prospective American air-launched cruise missiles and probably some sea-launched cruise missiles within that limit. The American proposal for a limit of 5,000 nuclear warheads is only for missile warheads, not for bombs and cruise missiles.

The effect of the Soviet approach would be to place stringent limits on these two American programs.

But the Soviet proposal in the talks on medium-range nuclear forces would effectively ban all deployments of the ground-launched cruise missile and the new Pershing 2 missile as well. Administration officials said it called for a common ceiling of 300 medium-range missiles and bombers.

As the Russians define the Western ceiling, it would include some 162 British and French nuclear missiles and about 160 American F-111 bombers stationed in Britain. Thus, the West would already be over the limit and, by a separate proposal, would not be allowed to substitute new missiles for the old missiles and bombers.

In return, Moscow would eliminate some, but not all, of its present force of 1,000 medium-range missiles and bombers. Of that 1,000, it would not eliminate some 200 or more missiles and bombers that are deployed in the eastern part of the Soviet Union. The missiles and bombers could be readily redeployed to the western part of the Soviet Union.